

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD
STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2012**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) has been in operation since 1997. Serving as one of the then-two chartering authorities within the District, the PCSB's first ten years were focused on establishing an internal structure that would provide:

- A sound application process for the selection of promising charter school models;
- Oversight processes that evaluated school performance and determined board actions towards schools while respecting school autonomy; and
- Appropriate connections with other District of Columbia agencies fundamental to charter school operations (e.g., the Office of the Chief Financial Officer).

Over the past eighteen months, the PCSB has participated in a rigorous strategic planning process to build upon the strengths of the organization, address challenges, and focus on its future capacity to support excellence in public education. Activities have included: internal and external capacity assessments; facilitated planning retreats involving the board and staff; data analyses; and discussions regarding the future direction of the organization. Working together, the board and staff were successful in refining the PCSB mission statement to reflect a shared understanding of the organization's identity and direction. This work also resulted in the articulation of a transformational vision, to which the board and staff aspire.

The resulting strategic plan focuses on the PCSB's internal capacity to support its mission, vision, and related priorities. The following pages provide a profile of the current PCSB; a brief discussion of the capacity assessment activities and results; and the emergent strategic goals, expected outcomes, and related actions needed to achieve them. The plan concludes with provisions for its management through financial planning, monitoring, and evaluation by the PCSB's Board and Leadership Team over the next three years.

About the DC Public Charter School Board

Over its 12-year history, the PCSB has received more than 150 applications, approved 52, denied 104, and subsequently closed 9 non-performing schools. Based on the very deliberate work of the application and oversight processes, the PCSB is recognized as a credible and national leading charter authorizer. In October 2008, the PCSB received the Award for Excellence for Improving Practice in Authorizing from the National Association for Charter School Authorizers.

The PCSB currently oversees 57 schools on 99 campuses, which serve more than 27,000 students from every ward of the city. The organization's *mission* is to provide high quality public school options for District of Columbia students, families, and community through four functions:

- ***A comprehensive review application process***—ensures that the PCSB only approves charter school applications that demonstrate research-based programs, experienced leadership, and community support;

- **Effective oversight**—holds schools to high standards for results, with extensive reviews and data collection, and makes oversight decisions with the best interests of students in mind;
- **Meaningful support**—provides clear feedback and increased oversight to struggling schools, and rewards consistently high-performing schools with more autonomy; and
- **Active engagement of stakeholders**—solicits community input and strives to be responsive to and transparent with all who are impacted by and impact the PCSB and public charter schools.

The PCSB's **vision** is to lead the transformation of public education in DC and to serve as a national model for charter school authorizing and accountability.

At the heart of the organization's **core values** is the belief that every child is entitled to a high quality educational experience that will enable him or her to leave high school well-prepared for college and careers.

A mayor-appointed governing board of seven, and a professional staff of 23 are responsible for the oversight and management of the organization's mission and vision.

Strategic Goals, Outcomes, and Related Actions

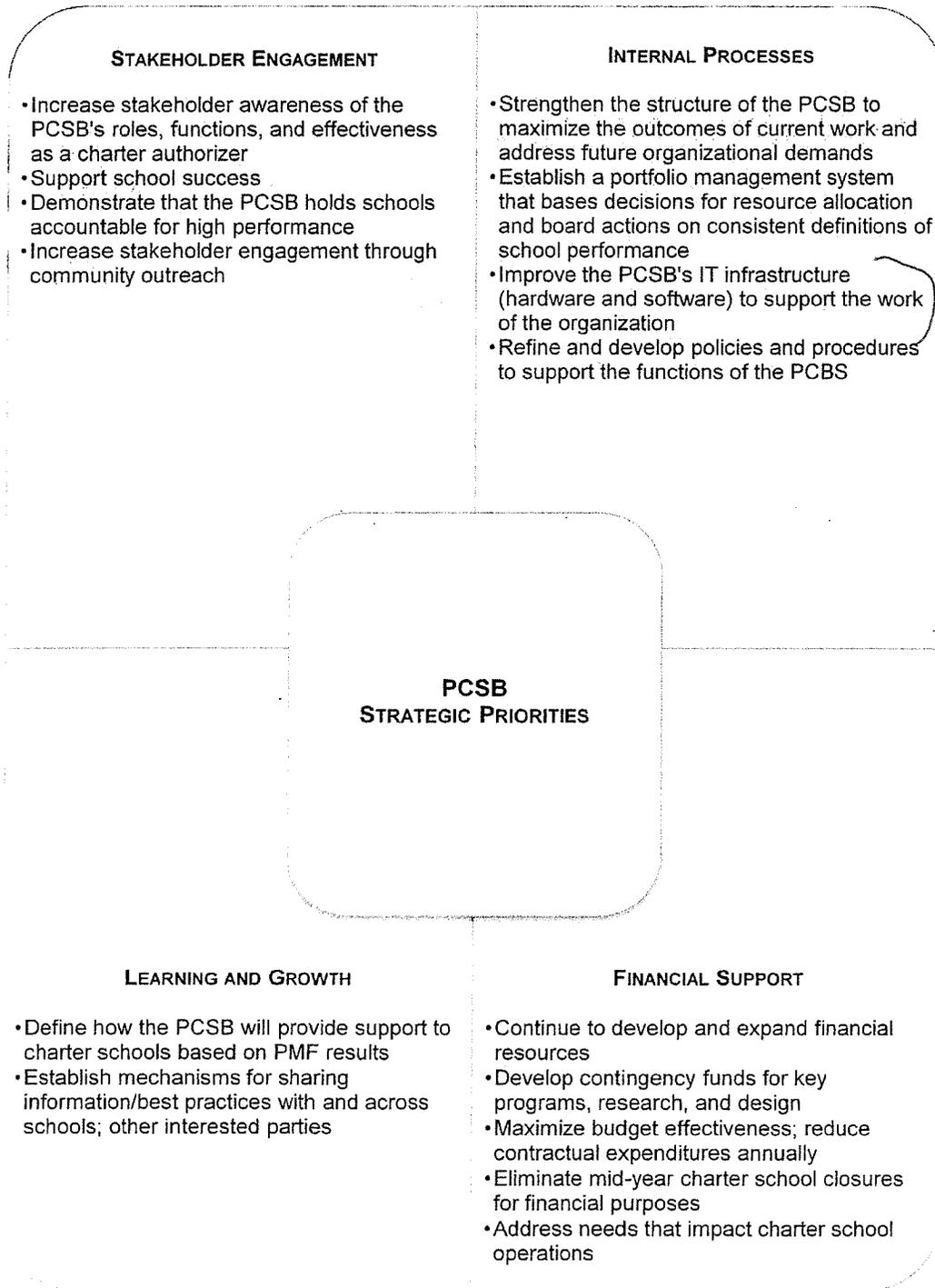
The information gathered from the internal and external capacity assessments, relevant organizational decisions, and subsequent planning have helped to shape the goals, desired outcomes, and related activities identified in this strategic plan.

The overarching issues that the plan addresses are:

- **Maintaining Independence and Long-Term Sustainability**—Supporting the PCSB's role as a nationally recognized authorizer and leader in school reform.
- **Strengthening Organizational Structure**—Targeting staffing and expanding internal policies and procedures.
- **Increasing Accountability**—Enhancing board development (e.g., orientation, training, assessment) and governance (i.e., oversight, accountability, fiduciary responsibility, and related policy management).
- **Improving the Use of Data for Decision Making**—Enhancing infrastructure to inform development of school portfolio and policies.
- **Continuing and Expanding Outreach**—Providing technical assistance and support to enhance stakeholder engagement.
- **Improving Communication**—Focusing internally (i.e., among staff and board members) and externally (targeting key stakeholders).

Presented within the full plan are the goal statements, outcome measures, and annual activities that will strengthen the capacity of the PCSB to support its mission and vision over the next three years. And while the goals will remain constant, the outcome measures and related activities differ annually.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS 2009 – 2012



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See the full plan to review related annual action plans detailing all related activities, including progress indicators, persons responsible, and timelines.

Plan Management

The PCSB's financial well-being will be tantamount to the organization's ability to successfully implement the proposed strategic plan. Building upon the 12-year history of strong financial management and health, traditional and non-traditional (i.e., grant funds, other) will be sought to ensure strengthened capacity to manage current and long-term goals.

The PCSB board and staff leadership will share the monitoring, evaluation, and annual review of the plan: the board through committee work and deliberation as a whole; the staff through a reporting system that will identify the real-time status of stated goals and related activities.

Conclusion

The ability of the PCSB to remain a leader in education reform rests squarely on the success of its efforts on behalf of the District of Columbia's children and their families. Increased accountability, improved technical assistance and training, and ongoing attention to school excellence and best practices, are all moves in the right direction.

The internal capacity of the organization to meet the needs of charter schools relies heavily upon well-qualified staff, effective policies, and strong communication between board and staff to ensure consistent approaches that align with organizational priorities. Attention to organizational structure, policy development, and improved internal communication will strengthen organizational outcomes.

Success also relies upon the ability to address the tension inherent in responding to immediate charter school needs and planning for the future. The ability to learn while continually evolving to ensure children are guaranteed opportunities to receive a high quality public education will require data-driven decision making, reflective practices, and annual planning to maintain relevance for today and innovation for the future.

The strategic plan presented makes provisions for these needs and sets a course for continuous improvement.

For more information about the full strategic plan, contact:

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